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CIA AGENT OR CON MAN? Keiser
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Ernest Keiser has been described as an undercover intelligence agent, a professional con artist and a mystery man who exists in a "bizaare world."

Keiser, 65, helped the federal government lure renegade CIA agent Edwin Wilson from Libya in 1982. Besides trapping Wilson, Keiser claimed to be working on capturing fugitive financier Robert Vesco, and had offered help in finding Nazi criminal Josef Mengele.

Keiser has been missing from his northern Virginia home since Jan. 31 and is believed to have jumped \$5,000 bail, authorities say.

"There's no question in my mind he jumped bail," said Westchester, N.Y., County Assistant Prosecutor Tony Berk. "Finding him is not imminent."

"I'm not sure that anyone outside of his immediate family knows who he is," said former federal prosecutor Chris Hoyer. "He exists and functions in a bizarre world."

Hoyer said there were too many strange stories from the man, who spoke with a German accent.

The mention of Keiser's name prompted one of his neighbors to say: "We don't discuss Ernest Keiser, sorry."

Berk, who called Keiser a "professional con artist," had sought to have \$5,000 bail forfeited after Keiser was convicted of land fraud in White Plains, N.Y. in the belief Keiser would vanish.

Judge Gerard Delaney, who continued bail despite Berk's argument, noted Keiser's "rather colorful background," but said federal authorities would have taken Keiser to Florida anyway for another trial.

"In all probability I was going to fine him rather than put him in jail," added Delaney. "He's in his 60s and I didn't want to saddle taxpayers with his care."

Keiser's attorney William Aronwald acknowledged Keiser's intelligence work, but called him a businessman.

Keiser had been ordered to report to Aronwald every three days. He last spoke to the attorney Jan. 28, and a few days later left his home in McLean, Va., a Washington suburb, with his wife, Bahira, and mother-in-law, Margaret Demachkie. He has not been heard from since.

When Keiser failed to attend a pre-sentence meeting in White Plains and the Florida trial, warrants were issued. His wife also is being sought.

Family clothing, cars, dogs and bank accounts were nowhere to be seen and officials speculated the family has fled the country.